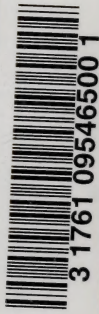


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Daniel C. Harvey

JOSEPH HOWE AND LOCAL PATRIOTISM

An Inaugural Lecture
Delivered on March 10th, 1921

BY
PROFESSOR D. C. HARVEY

OF THE
Department of History

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JOSEPH HOWE AND LOCAL PATRIOTISM

Joseph Howe, the great Nova Scotian patriot and statesman, died in Government House, Halifax, on June 1st, 1873. On the morning after his death, a Halifax merchant saw a farmer sitting in a melancholy heap on a box outside his door, weeping for Howe. He himself had just been reading an appreciation of the statesman's career, in part as follows: "For many years Howe has been the foremost figure in our history, the champion of the rights of colonists and the triumphant enemy of veteran abuses in colonial government. His vigorous pen had made Great Britain acquainted with the wrongs which the system of irresponsible government had inflicted upon us. His almost matchless oratory had awakened the people to a sense of their own dignity. There is scarcely one beneficial act in the code of laws affecting the American colonies with which Joseph Howe's efforts are not in some way associated. Many of his rivals and friends were men of brilliant talent and solid education, yet Joseph Howe contrived to lead them all through the sheer force of genius . . . The news of his death will be known in the country towns and will spread to the scattered villages. . . . The farmers driving along the country roads will stop to talk over his life and tell anecdotes of his conflicts. Those whose threshold he has crossed and by whose fireside he has made himself at home will recall his humour, his kindness, his sympathy, his many stories told as the night deepened and the logs in the chimney grew dim toward the hour of retiring." . . .

It is not because there is anything particularly morbid about a Canadian University audience that one asks you to close your ears to the sounds that come from the boy's nursery or to shut your eyes to the glorious struggles of his youth and prime and to stand at once beside his grave, but

rather that you may get a brief glance at the mortal remains of a man whose name will be honoured wherever the story of Nova Scotia is told. Obituary notices are generally as mendacious as reminiscences, autobiographies or censored war news, but in this case they do something less than justice to the part played by Howe in creating a Nova Scotian patriotism and to his personality which dominated his generation for more than forty years. "No single leader of men in Canada," says MacMechan, "not even Papineau, in Quebec, wielded the power of Howe over his fellow countrymen. Howe is the one authentic case of hero worship in Canadian history. To this day men dispute over his engaging, complex character and remember as an honour that they once carried his letters or held his horse."

As the speeches and public letters of Howe have been with difficulty compressed into two large volumes of more than thirteen hundred pages and cover an active public career of almost fifty years, it is obvious that no adequate conception of either his life or his work can be given in a brief lecture of fifty minutes; but an attempt will be made to suggest what he meant to Nova Scotia, what were the dominating motives of his life and whether he being dead yet speaketh to the youth of to-day.

Though Howe owed nothing to wealth or position, he was fortunate in his parentage. His father was one of the twenty-five thousand Loyalists from New England who settled in Nova Scotia; and his mother was the daughter of an English officer who also came to Halifax after the American Revolution. Though his father became King's Printer and Postmaster-General of Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and the Bermudas, his income was not equal to the modest needs of his small family, and Joseph had to leave school at the age of thirteen. He began work as a printer's devil in his father's office, where he laid the foundations of his later success in journalism. At the same time he read the Bible and Shakespeare with his father, French with a woman relative, the modern poets with other friends and every book in history or biography that could be found in the Halifax Public Library. When

at leisure he roamed the lovely woods that fringe the north-west arm of Halifax harbor, swam in its waters on rising with the sun and again before retiring with the moon. Throughout his life he retained these habits of vigorous outdoor exercise and of voracious reading within the family circle. Of his father, who died in 1835, Howe said: "For thirty years he was my instructor, my playfellow, almost my daily companion. To him I owe my fondness for reading, my familiarity with the Bible, my knowledge of old colonial and American incidents and characteristics. He left me nothing but his example and the memory of his many virtues, for all that he ever earned was given to the poor. He was too good for this world; but the remembrance of his high principle, his cheerfulness, his childlike simplicity and truly Christian character is never absent from my mind."

Howe was fortunate also in the place of his birth. Apart from the natural beauty of Halifax, it is possessed of one of the finest harbors in the world, long the headquarters of the British North Atlantic fleet. Here from his youth, Howe had his imagination kindled by the beckoning waves of the Atlantic, by the sight of men-of-war at anchor below the city and by the sound of the bugle from Garrison Hill. Halifax, too, was the capital of Nova Scotia, and bore much the same relation to the rest of the province as Paris does to France. It was the depository of its traditions, the star of its future and the controller of its immediate destinies. And Nova Scotia was not without a history; here the French had made their first settlement at Port Royal in 1605; here the Acadians had lived and loved and lost; here Halifax had been founded to offset the great French fortress of Louisburg, whose memories also the province inherited; here the first elective assembly in British North America had met thirty-three years before such a thing had been granted to the Canadas; here the two hundred Harvard graduates who had been exiled from New England, had made their contribution to literature and to scholarship and here was treasured the best of Americanism, idealised because of that exile, and the warmest devotion to the British flag for which those sacrifices had been made. Of all the provinces that existed or still exist, Nova Scotia was the only one which

had its own flag and this flag was borne into every ocean by over three thousand Nova Scotian ships.

With such a training from his father or from necessity, and with such a stimulus to love of country in this history, of his province, Howe devoted himself to journalism until his political career dawned.

In 1827, at the age of 23, he purchased, in partnership with Mr. James Spike, the *Weekly Chronicle*, changed its name to *The Acadian* and filled its columns with news, poetry and local sketches. Within a year, however, he sold out to his partner and purchased on his own, *The Nova Scotian* which he soon made the leading paper in British North America. In the interests of this paper he walked or rode over most of Nova Scotia and gave his descriptions and impressions in a series of articles known as his "*Eastern and Western Rambles*." In these *Rambles* he called attention to the agricultural and mining resources of the province, to its commercial facilities and above all to its natural beauty. According to Dr. Baker, the latest critic of English-Canadian literature, these sketches "set a new standard in Canadian prose."

At the same time Howe introduced a novel feature into his paper in the form of legislative reviews. These were a critical summary of speeches in the Legislative Assembly and they soon established his reputation as a journalist. It was in *The Nova Scotian* also that the contributions of "The Club" were published. "The Club" was a group of friends of whom Howe and Haliburton, the author of "Sam Slick," were the leading spirits. It met in Howe's house and planned weekly criticisms, in quaint dialect, of local politicians. The efforts of these men attracted such wide attention that on the death of Christopher North, Blackwood's suggested that "The Club" assume editorship of the great Scottish magazine.

While Howe's success as a journalist was becoming conspicuous, he was suddenly called upon to champion the freedom of the press in his own country. In 1835 a letter appeared in *The Nova Scotian*, signed "The People," accusing the magistrates of Halifax of misappropriating £30,000. As

a result Howe was indicted for criminal libel in an age when the truth of the charge did not extenuate the offence. The object of the indictment was not so much to exonerate the magistrates as to silence criticism, and everyone believed that Howe, like Gourelay in Upper Canada, would soon be languishing in gaol. He went to several lawyers but was unable to get anyone to defend him. Nothing daunted, he borrowed an armful of books, threw himself on a sofa, read libel for a week, and on the day of his trial defended himself in a speech of more than six hours in length. In the act of defence he was much encouraged to see the tears trickling down the cheeks of an old gentleman in the courtroom and this helped him to a magnificent finish. When the jury returned the verdict "Not Guilty," Howe was carried home on the shoulders of his friends. The band played all night in the streets of Halifax and Howe, compelled again and again to address the exultant crowd, advised them to go home and teach their children the names of the twelve men who had established the freedom of the press. He himself had good reason to feel that he had established this freedom not only in his own province, but throughout British North America.

His sudden popularity caused him to be elected in the following year to the local assembly as a representative for the county of Halifax. And for the next twelve years he fought and won the battle of Responsible Government.

It is assumed that everyone here understands both what is meant by Responsible Government and by the Old Colonial System. In 1758, Nova Scotia had been given representative but not responsible government. The government consisted of a Governor who represented the Crown, a Council appointed by the Crown and a Legislative Assembly elected by the people. But the Governor was regarded as responsible to the Colonial Office only and the Legislative Council could not be controlled by the representatives of the people. At the same time the representative house, lacking complete power of the purse, often had its wishes vetoed by the Council, which sat with closed doors. There was no municipal government, consequently the appointment of the

magistrates and the entire patronage in church or state was in the hands of this irresponsible Governor and Council.

Howe commenced his attack upon the Council, which refused to admit the public to its debates; and when the Council haughtily replied that its procedure concerned itself alone, he moved his famous "Twelve Resolutions," in which, amongst other abuses, he pointed out that one-fifth of the population monopolized all the offices in the gift of that body, that two family connections gave five out of its twelve members, and that only the Church of England was recognized in the distribution of office or patronage. In a word, the resolutions opposed every disproportionate influence in religion and justice, education and finance.

The Council ignored eleven of the twelve resolutions adopted by the Assembly, but threatened to withhold supplies unless they withdrew the other resolution to the effect that some members of the Council "sought to protect their own interests and emoluments at the expense of the public." As the failure of supply would have injured the roads and bridges of the province rather than the salaries of the officials which were paid from revenues uncontrolled by the Assembly, Howe withdrew all the resolutions; but in doing so, he asked that such an address should be presented to the Crown as would reveal the state of the colony, and attain the objects for which he was contending. In this way he managed to accuse the Council before both the local constituencies and the Imperial authorities. The address to the Crown drew from the Colonial Office a dispatch modifying the constitution. The Council was divided into two, a Legislative Council of 19 members and an Executive of 12. In the latter the influence of the Church of England was to be diminished, whilst at the same time some of the members were to be chosen from the House of Assembly, but no pledge was given that any members of the Executive should always be taken from the Assembly or be responsible to it.

After the Canadian Rebellion of 1837, which Howe loyally repudiated, Lord J. Russell, the Colonial Secretary, admitted that the government should be carried on in accordance with the wishes of the people, but still maintained that Responsible

Government could only belong to an independent state, and was not consistent with colonial relationships. This speech gave Howe an opportunity to write four open letters to the noble Lord, in which he spoke the last word on Colonial Government. These letters anticipated Sir John Seeley by forty years in arguing that there should be no distinction between an Englishman overseas and an Englishman in Cornwall or Yorkshire. They breathed throughout a passionate loyalty to British traditions coupled with a passionate insistence upon the rights of Britons on this side of the Atlantic. The following is a brief extract from the conclusion of the fourth letter and shows Howe in a characteristic vein.

"If, my Lord, in every one of the three great kingdoms from which the population of British America derive their origin, the evils of which we complain were experienced and continued until the principles we claim as our birthright became firmly established, is it to be expected that we shall not endeavor to rid ourselves, by respectful argument and remonstrance, of what cost you open and violent resistance to put down? Can an Englishman, an Irishman or a Scotchman be made to believe, by passing a month upon the sea, that the most stirring periods of his history are but a cheat and a delusion; that the scenes which he has been accustomed to tread with deep emotions are but momentos of the folly, and not, as he once fondly believed, of the wisdom and courage of his ancestors; that the principles of civil liberty, which from childhood he has been taught to cherish and to protect by forms of stringent responsibility, must, with the new light breaking in upon him on this side of the Atlantic, be cast aside as a useless incumbrance? No, my Lord, it is madness to suppose that these men so remarkable for carrying their national characteristics into every part of the world where they penetrate, shall lose the most honorable of them all, merely by passing from one portion of the Empire to another. Nor is it to be supposed that Nova Scotians, New Brunswickers, and Canadians—a race sprung from the generous admixture of the blood of the three foremost nations of the world—proud of their parentage and not unworthy of it, to whom every stirring period of British and Irish history, every great principle which they

teach, every phrase of freedom to be gleaned from them, are as familiar as household words, can be in haste to forget what they learnt upon their parents' knees; what those they loved and honored clung to with so much pride and regarded as beyond all price. Those who expect them thus to belie their origin or to disgrace it may as soon hope to see the streams turn back upon their fountains. My Lord, my countrymen feel, as they have a right to feel, that the Atlantic, the great highway of communication with their brethren at home, should be no barrier to shut out the civil privileges and political rights which more than anything else make them proud of the connection: and they feel also that there is nothing in their present position or their past conduct to warrant such exclusion . . . If, then, our right to inherit the constitution be clear; if our capacity to maintain and enjoy it cannot be questioned; have we done anything to justify the alienation of our birthright? Many of the original settlers of this province emigrated from the old colonies when they were in a state of rebellion—not because they did not love freedom, but because they loved it under the old banner and the old forms; and many of their descendants have shed their blood, on land and sea, to defend the honor of the Crown and the integrity of the Empire. On some of the hardest fought fields of the Peninsula my countrymen died in the front rank, with their faces to the foe. The proudest naval trophy of the last American war was brought by a Nova Scotian into the harbor of his native town; and the blood that flowed from Nelson's death wound in the cockpit of the Victory, mingled with that of a Nova Scotian stripling beside him, struck down in the same glorious fight. Am I not then justified, my Lord, in claiming for my countrymen that Constitution, which can be withheld from them by no plea but one unworthy of a British statesman—the tyrants' plea of power. I know that I am; and I feel also, that this is not the race that can be hoodwinked with sophistry, or made to submit to injustice without complaint. All suspicion of disloyalty we cast aside, as the product of ignorance or cupidity; we seek for nothing more than British subjects are entitled to; but we will be contented with nothing less."

It was these letters which convinced the Colonial Office that Canadians were mature enough for self-government and that truer loyalty could be found amongst the champions of Responsible Government than amongst those who branded all reformers as rebels.

As a result a circular despatch was sent to the various governors instructing them not to oppose the wishes of the assemblies except where the honor of the Crown or the interests of the Empire were deeply concerned, and adding that the heads of departments should be removed whenever public policy required it.

Sir Colin Campbell, Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, refused to present this dispatch to the Assembly. The latter immediately passed a resolution of regret and sent an address to the Crown requesting his recall. Though Howe addressed meetings all over the province in support of this address, the Lieutenant-Governor recognized the sincerity of his opposition, and in parting gave him the assurance that he regarded him as a man of honor. His action in this regard contrasts favorably with the local autocrats who "scorned Howe at their feasts and insulted him at their funerals."

Campbell was succeeded by Lord Falkland, who was married to a daughter of William IV. Unfortunately, this marriage did nothing to remove Falkland's worst weakness, which Howe satirized in the "Lord of the Bed-chamber," from which the following lines are taken:

"It was plain, from the flush that o'ermantled his cheek,
And the fluster and haste of his stride
That drowned and bewildered, his brain had grown weak
By the blood pumped aloft by his pride."

Falkland tried to form an Executive Council from both parties, with himself as head. Howe accepted a seat, but in 1843 he and Johnston, the Tory leader, quarrelled over the question of education. A private member had brought in a bill for the establishment of one good college, free from sectarian control, open to all denominations and maintained by a common fund. Johnston, as a Baptist, supported the

claims of Acadia; but Howe, the great champion of free undenominational schools, made an appeal for the students who should be able "to drink at the pure stream of Science and Philosophy instead of imbibing a sectarian spirit." As a result of the debate, Howe and the Liberal members of the Council resigned. Johnston still stood for "non-party" government, and as Howe said, "Denounced party to form one of his own."

The Governor supported Johnston and carried on a relentless war in the press. Howe resumed the editorship of *The Nova Scotian* and poured ridicule upon Falkland in prose and verse. Johnston tried to have his conduct censured in the Assembly, mentioning particularly the "Lord of the Bedchamber." Howe replied that his honest fame was as dear to him as Lord Falkland's title, "Falkland's name might be written in Burke's peerage, but his had no record except on the hills and valleys of his country and must live, if it lived at all, in the hearts of those who tread them."

When Falkland, in 1846, wrote home certain criticisms of the Speaker and his brother, Howe again attacked him for stabbing by secret dispatches in such a way that no Nova Scotian would henceforth be safe. He went so far as to say that if respectable colonists were to be libelled in dispatches to the Colonial Office in a way that gave no chance of defence or redress, then "some colonist will by and by, or I am much mistaken, hire a black fellow to horsewhip a lieutenant-governor."

Falkland was immediately recalled and succeeded by Sir John Harvey. At the same time Lord John Russell became Prime Minister of England, and his Colonial Secretary, Lord Grey, determined to grant a full measure of self-government to the colonies. With the triumph of the Reformers in the election of 1847, Howe's victory was complete, Responsible Government had been won and he can be pardoned for boasting in one of his fugitive poems:

"The blood of no brother, in civil strife poured
In this hour of rejoicing, encumbers our souls."

It is interesting to note that Howe based his attack not so much upon the oppressive legislation of an irresponsible

government as upon the fact that such government was a reflection upon the intelligence and ability of the colonists. Above all on the fact that it was not English. He wanted Responsible Government because it was the undoubted birthright of the descendants of the men who had won it at home and because to be denied it was to be cut off from the best traditions of the British race.

In 1837 he said: "Were you to tell an Englishman that you, the Commons of the country, had no effectual control over the other branches of your government, that here there exists no check which ensures responsibility to the people, what opinion would he form of the degree of freedom you enjoy? Were you to propose that half the House of Lords should be chosen from two family connections and the other half should be made up of public officers and directors of the Bank of England, he would laugh you to scorn; he would tell you he would not tolerate such an upper branch for a single hour. Sir, it is because I feel that the institutions we have are not English, that they are such as would never be suffered to exist at home and ought never to be sanctioned by the descendants of Britons in the Colonies, that I desire a change."

There is no doubt that if Howe were discussing to-day the question of a Canadian flag or the restriction of appeals to our own supreme court, or the appointment of a Canadian ambassador at Washington or understudies in the diplomatic centres of Europe he would support all these aspirations on the same high grounds. "So long as there is a trace of colonial subordination in a self-governing Dominion that has achieved self-consciousness," he would say, "there will always be a feeling of irritation, a feeling that we have been denied our birthright, and an unfortunate tendency to accuse the mother-country of sacrificing our interests to the exigencies of imperial policy." This lack of harmony can be overcome only by removing all survivals of the old Colonial system, not as a step towards separation from the British stream of thought and tradition, but rather that we may feel ourselves in the midst of that stream, bearing our tributary contribution to the heart of the empire with

gratitude and self-respect. Then we could all say, as he once said so magnificently, "Sir, when I go to England, when I realize that dream of my youth, if I can help it, it shall not be with a budget of grievances in my hand. I shall go to survey the home of my fathers with the veneration it is calculated to inspire; to tread on those spots which the study of her history has made classic ground to me; where Hampden and Sydney struggled for the freedom she enjoys, where her orators and statesmen have thundered in defence of the liberties of mankind. And I trust in God that when that day comes I shall not be compelled to look back with sorrow and degradation to the country I have left behind; that I shall not be forced to confess that though here the British name exists, and her language is preserved, we have but a mockery of British institutions; that when I clasp the hand of an Englishman on the shores of my fatherland, he shall not thrill with the conviction that his descendant is little better than a slave."

With Responsible Government won, Howe next turned to the problem of transportation, which he had deferred during the battle with the Colonial Office. He was the first man in British North America to catch a vision of the possibilities of railway expansion. In 1835 he had advocated the construction of a railway from Halifax to Windsor; in 1838 he had been partly instrumental in securing a steam mail-service between Nova Scotia and England; and now in 1851 he went as a delegate to England to get Imperial support for an Inter-colonial railway between Halifax and Montreal. On his return from this trip he made the historic prophecy in regard to the Canadian Pacific: "I believe that many in this room will live to hear the whistle of the steam engine in the passes of the Rocky Mountains and to make the journey from Halifax to the Pacific in five or six days."

As Imperial support of an Inter-Colonial railway was conditional upon its avoidance of the direct route through the valley of the St. John, Canada and New Brunswick withdrew, thereby postponing the scheme until Confederation. But Howe urged his province to build railways regardless of the other provinces, and in the face of much opposition se-

cured a Bill in 1854 for the line from Halifax to Windsor, with a view to further extension both eastward and westward. To carry out this project he refused the premiership and became railway commissioner, because he felt that the subject needed his undivided attention.

During the next few years at intervals he sought a position in the Imperial service, stating his claims to at least half a dozen Colonial Secretaries. To Lord John Russell, he said: "To win a position here in the heart of my fatherland is my highest ambition." But there were too many needy friends of the Colonial Office and Howe's ambition was never realized. During the Crimean war he was sent to the United States to secure recruits, but the sympathy of the United States was with Russia, particularly the sympathy of the Irish-Americans, and Howe was mobbed in New York, having to make his escape by a hotel window. The chief result of his mission was the alienation of the Roman Catholic vote in Nova Scotia, and in the elections of 1855 his party was overthrown and he was defeated by Tupper. In 1860, however, his party was back in power with him as premier, but three years later Tupper was again victorious. In this year Howe became Imperial Fisheries Commissioner at the very time when he should have been in his own province for the Charlottetown conference on Maritime Union, and the persistent deadlock in the Canadas had precipitated the question of Confederation. In 1849 Howe had advocated Confederation as an antidote to annexation. In 1851 he had advocated an inter-colonial railway on the ground that it would help toward Confederation; but in 1865, when the Quebec scheme was presented to Nova Scotia, he opposed it in a series of vigorous articles which did much to crystallize the opposition of his province against the movement. Had Howe supported Confederation it would have been a fitting climax to his great career and would have saved him from much of the obloquy that has been heaped upon him by superficial historians. It is the fashion of critics, chiefly from Ontario, to accuse Howe of egotism and to explain his opposition as mere personal pique. It is unfortunate that in an unguarded moment he did say that he would not "play second fiddle to that d—d Tupper"; and it is undoubtedly

true that Howe had grown more egotistical as the years went by. It was natural that the man who had made Nova Scotia would feel that he should have a voice in determining its future. But it is altogether too simple to say that Howe carried his whole province in support of his egotism, for Howe was not the only egotist in Nova Scotia. Sir Charles Tupper, himself, giving a speech in our own city some years ago, used the word "I" so frequently that our reporters were unable to count the number and in desperation one of our leading papers gave a full report of the speech under the brief but telling caption of a gigantic "I."

Howe had grown more and more the egotist, but in the Quebec scheme he found much to oppose in the genuine interests of Nova Scotia. He felt that as a province she had not secured adequate recognition; that her financial interests had been sacrificed; that she would be forced from free trade into protection and would be fleeced by the Canadian politicians of whom he was justly suspicious, since they had failed him in the inter-colonial railway scheme of 1851. Above all, his province was being forced into the Union without a mandate from its people and the thought of this was too much for the old champion of self-government. Consequently, he opposed it and took to Ottawa in opposition eighteen of the nineteen Nova Scotian members, all pledged to repeal of Confederation. He went to England to plead his cause, but finding Imperial influence arrayed against him he was too loyal to stand for rebellion or for annexation and, sadly he entered the cabinet at Ottawa to be hated by his recent supporters and not too much loved by his new colleagues. In 1872 he joined forces with Tupper and for a time silenced the anti-confederation movement in Nova Scotia. In May 1873, he returned to Halifax as Lieutenant-Governor and there he died a month later.

Howe's appeal to history must undoubtedly be made upon his record prior to Confederation and upon his personal charm as much as upon his public work. Though he sought wider opportunities in the Imperial service he never hankered after the tinsel trappings of knighthood. To young and old alike the great Nova Scotian was plain "Joe" Howe.

Others might be concerned about their official dignity; but Howe loved to mingle with the people, to call the farmers by their Christian names, to kiss their wives and to play with their children. "He had got much of his education and sanity of outlook in exchanging tales by the farmer's fire-side, and when he died he left many a farm-house saddened as by a great and personal loss."

In spite of this ease of manner, Howe was capable of great courage both on behalf of a principle and in the name of honor. Living in the days of duelling, he was frequently challenged to mortal combat. The first misunderstanding was peaceably settled. The second was more serious and Howe accepted it. It came from John C. Haliburton, son of the Chief Justice, whose salary Howe had criticized in his battle for Responsible Government. Though anything but a man of blood, Howe felt that his future influence would have been endangered by refusal. To his wife he justified his position on the ground that "she could better face the world without a protector than with one whose courage was suspected." To the people of Nova Scotia he explained that "even the shadow of imputation upon his moral courage would incapacitate him for serving his country with vigor and success hereafter." Haliburton missed his mark and Howe generously fired in the air. Henceforth he could refuse all challenges, as he did that of Sir Rupert D. George, to whom he wrote that he had no desire to be shot at by every public officer "whose abilities he might happen to contrast with his emoluments."

Fortunately for colonial freedom, Howe had both the courage of his convictions and the gift of rendering them articulate. (Even the biographer of Sir John A. Macdonald ranks him as "incomparably the finest speaker, the greatest natural orator that British North America has produced.") Beginning with pleasant banter, passing to historical allusions, as he warmed to his subject he would throw back his coat and allow free course to the full torrent of his eloquence. His fame was not restricted to the little province by the sea, nor even to the neighboring states who well knew his power, but it crossed the seas and won flattering

comments from the British press.) In 1865, at an International Convention, in Detroit, he addressed a hostile audience on the Reciprocity issue with such skill that a resolution was unanimously passed in favor of a renewal of the expiring treaty. A paragraph from this speech will illustrate both his style and his passionate belief in the fundamental unity of the great Anglo-Saxon race.

"Sir, we are here to determine how best we can draw together in bonds of peace, friendship and commercial prosperity the three great branches of the British family. In the presence of this great theme all petty interests should stand rebuked—we are not dealing with the concerns of a city, a province or a state, but with the future of our race in all time to come . . .

"Why should not these three great branches of the family flourish, under different systems of government, it may be, but forming one grand whole, proud of a common origin, and of their advanced civilization? The clover lifts its trefoil leaves to the evening dew, yet they draw their nourishment from a single stem. Thus distinct, and yet united, let us live and flourish. Why should we not? For nearly two thousand years we were one family. Our fathers fought side by side at Hastings and heard the curfew toll. They fought in the same ranks for the sepulchre of our Saviour—in the earlier and later civil wars. We can wear our white and red roses without a blush, and glory in the principles those conflicts established. Our common ancestors won the Great Charter and the Bill of Rights—established Free Parliaments, the *Habeas Corpus* and Trial by Jury. Our jurisprudence comes down from Coke and Mansfield to Marshal and Story, rich in knowledge and experience which no man can divide. From Chaucer to Shakespeare our literature is a common inheritance; Tennyson and Longfellow write in one language which is enriched by the genius developed on either side of the Atlantic. In the great navigators from Cotterel to Hudson, and in all the 'moving accident by flood and field' we have common interest."

It is not surprising to find that a great democrat like Howe believed in free education embracing every child of

every home. For this reason he was opposed to public support of sectarian institutions. "I deny the necessity of sectarian colleges, and express a confident opinion that the people will judge correctly on such subjects when the whole merits of the case are before them. When I look abroad on the works of Providence, I see no sectarianism in the forest or in the broad river that sparkles through the meadows; and shall we be driven to the conclusion that men cannot live together without being divided by that which ought to be a bond of Christian union.

"It has been said that we want, by creating a central institution, to destroy all the others and 'wrest the education of their children from the people.' Shame, shame on the men who have thus deliberately slandered the Legislature of their country! From first to last we have disclaimed any coercive legislation. The Baptists or any other body may maintain a dozen colleges if they choose, but they must do it with their own resources.

"But then these sectarian colleges are to do such great things for religion. I believe that in a short time they would banish it from the province. One of them kept the eastern counties in hot water for sixteen years; and another has produced more strife, division and hard feeling than any other bone of contention, religious, social or political. The people must have one college as they have one supreme court; one province building; one penitentiary; and if others want more, let them maintain them at their own expense.

"But it is said if a college is not sectarian it must be infidel. Is infidelity taught in our academies and schools? No; and yet not one of them is sectarian. A college would be under strict discipline, established by its governors; clergymen would occupy some of its chairs; moral philosophy, which to be sound, must be based on Christianity, would be conspicuously taught; and yet the religious men who know all this raise the cry of infidelity to frighten the farmers in the country."

The same broadmindedness characterized his utterances in regard to freedom of conscience. He believed in

religious freedom, rather than religious toleration—a free church in a free state.

“The beautiful streams that intersect our country in all directions roll past the dwellings of Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Methodists, and shed an equal charm upon the children playing on the banks. In passing by their orchards I cannot observe any richer tint upon the blossoms or finer flavor on the fruit of the one than of the other; nor is there any distinction in the verdure with which nature clothes their fields. The mackerel run as freely into a Catholic’s or a Baptist’s net as into any other, and I naturally enough ask myself why, as a legislator, I should make distinctions which God in His own good providence has not made. Nay, why should I not rather remove any which others, with the best intentions but with little foresight and most mistaken zeal, have set up, breeding contentions among the people? I wish to see Nova Scotians one happy family, worshipping it may be one God in various modes at different altars, yet feeling that their religious belief makes no distinction in their civil privileges, but that the government and the law are as universal as the atmosphere, pressing upon yet invigorating all alike.”

The frequent references to nature in Howe’s speeches were not mere rhetorical adornment. Howe loved the big out-of-doors and frequently after his great political fights he used to retire with his family to one of the many beauty spots of Nova Scotia to rest, to roam through the woods, to hunt, to swim, to enjoy the sunshine and the breeze and to restore his soul for future achievement.

There is time for only one story to illustrate Howe’s love of nature. One day as he was driving along a road he saw a farmer in the act of cutting down a beautiful grove of willows. Howe remonstrated with him, but the man protested that he needed the money. “How much do you need?” asked Howe. The man replied, “About five-pound.” Thereupon Howe cheerfully paid the sum out of his own pocket, and the trees still remain to cheer the hearts of all who drive that way.

However much one might like to linger over these incidents and characteristics which make Howe immortal, one must be content with the reflection that he lives in the hearts of his countrymen and that he remains as great an inspiration to the youth of the Maritime Provinces as Abraham Lincoln has become to the youth of America.

If one asks what were the dominating motives which urged Howe along the steep paths of achievement, the answer is found in his affection for the pioneers who laid the foundations of his country, his love of Nova Scotia itself and his loyalty to Great Britain. Like Napoleon, Howe early grasped the idea that the strength of a people lies in its history; and no one knew better than he the privations and achievements of the exiles who left New England to build up Nova Scotia. Every incident in their lives was written in marble upon the tablets of his memory and he never ceased to impress these memories upon his own generation, with remarkable insight, sympathy and astonishing wealth of illustration. Ready as he was to rejoice in the prosperity of the present and in the possibilities of the future, he seldom forgot the living past. In addressing a local audience, no matter how remote from the capital, he always began with some reference to its history and traditions and tried to elevate the most commonplace theme to a lofty plane. To him the greatest wealth of any country was not its material resources, but the blood and the sacrifice of its citizens who had preserved their heritage.

“ ’Twere mortal sin,
When banners o’er our country’s treasures wave,
Unmarked to leave the wealth safe garnered in the grave.”

The second impelling force in Howe’s life was his local patriotism. Having paid his tribute to the dead, whose spirit still hovered o’er them, he invariably exerted himself to the utmost to stimulate his generation by that love for their own land which would inspire them not to deeds of aggression but to high-minded emulation in an effort to raise it to the highest pinnacle of material, intellectual, aesthetic and moral welfare. This note persists in all his

speeches throughout his long life. In an address to the Mechanics' Institute, Halifax, in 1834, he says:

"The All-Wise Being, who divided the earth into continents, peninsulas and islands—who separated tribes from each other by mountain ranges and unfathomable seas; who gave a different feature and a different tongue—evidently intended that there should be a local knowledge and a local love, binding his creatures to particular spots of earth, and interesting them peculiarly for the prosperity, improvement and happiness of these places. The love of country, therefore, though distinguished from this universal love, boasts an origin as divine and serves purposes scarcely less admirable. It begets a generous rivalry among the nations of the earth, by which the intellectual and physical resources of each are developed and strengthened by constant exercise; and although sometimes abused by ignorance or criminal ambition, has a constant direction favorable to the growth of knowledge and the amelioration and improvement of human affairs.

"You who owe your origin to other lands cannot resist the conviction that as you loved them so will your children love this; and though the second place in their heart may be filled by merry England, romantic Scotland or the verdant fields of Erin, the first and highest will be occupied by the little province where they drew their earliest breath, and which claims from them filial reverence and care."

He then urges his youthful countrymen to raise up their native land to a point of distinction in agriculture, commerce and the arts, in literature and science, in knowledge and virtue, which shall win for her the admiration and esteem of other lands, and teach them to estimate Nova Scotia rather by her mental riches and resources, than by her age, her population, or geographical extent.

In spite of this ex-cathedra note of exhortation, Howe was not without humour in his patriotic endeavour. "Boys, brag of your country," he was wont to say. "When I am abroad I brag of everything that Nova Scotia is, has or can produce; and when they beat me at everything else, I turn

around on them and say 'How high do your tides rise?' " He felt sure no one could beat the tides of the Bay of Fundy.

The same spirit appears in his speech at Southampton, England, in 1851. "You boast of the beauty and fertility of England," he said; "why, there is one valley in Nova Scotia where you can ride for fifty miles under apple blossoms." Again, "Talk of the value of land. I know of an acre of rocks near Halifax worth more than an acre in London. Scores of hardy fishermen catch their breakfasts there in five minutes all the year round and no tillage is needed to make the production equally good for a thousand years to come."

On his last visit to Ottawa Howe addressed an audience in the same vein. After pointing out how bountiful nature had been to Ottawa in its site, its rivers, its mountain ranges, its lumbering facilities, he then alludes to her sessions of Parliament, to her libraries and other opportunities for self-improvement and reminds his audience that they must try to rise above provincialism and embrace the whole Dominion. For the whole Dominion is watching them and will not be content "if Ottawa produces no princely merchants, no orators, no artists, no learned professors or divines, but draws pecuniary resources and intellectual life from all the other cities of the confederacy and gives nothing in return."

The address reveals all the youthful love of country, all the old faith in the future and closes with the admonition that young men who devote their energies to trade should study the biographies of those merchant princes who in all ages have wedded commerce to literature and the arts, founded or embellished cities, and have become benefactors to the race. Young men intended for the professions should in like manner aspire to be something more than quacks and drones and pettifoggers. The highest names in medicine, the great sages of the law, the pulpit orators who have rivalled the prophets of old by their elevation of thought and luxuriance of illustration, should be hung around their chambers and be ever present to their minds.

'Let all the ends you aim at be your country's,
Your God's and Truth's.'

"That the parents who dearly love you may be honored by your behaviour and that the rising generation who come after you may be inspired by your example."

From these passages, selected at intervals of twenty years, it is not difficult to see that Howe was a sturdy, local patriot. But it must be remembered also that this was no mere boasting of physical resources or wealth or beauty. To Howe, love of one's own country was natural and inevitable and only wrong when it took the form of aggression or empty boast. To him material prosperity was necessary to life, but at the same time subordinate to it. The good life was the end, and love of country was but the means to that end, "a stimulant and principle of action; the perennial spring of virtue and of knowledge."

In his insistence upon the value of an intelligent local patriotism, Howe was in line with sound psychology. Men like Graham Wallas in England, the late Dr. Royce, of Harvard, and Professor Wright, of our own University, have clearly demonstrated that local patriotism is the surest foundation of political greatness; and the soundest exponents of internationalism base their systems not upon the destruction of the nation-state, but upon the development of a common moral outlook on the part of these nation-states, a common respect for law and a mutual desire for justice between state and state. Howe, too, would curb aggressive nationalism and direct national rivalry into channels of peaceful emulation in the advancement of agricultural and industrial prosperity, intellectual and moral well-being.

It is one of the achievements of Howe that with all his insistence upon local patriotism he was able to lift the emotion out of a narrow and petty provincialism and reconcile it with a fervid devotion to the mother country.

Nova Scotians should love their fathers because they were worthy of that love and had brought to their new home beyond the seas the essence and tradition of the

British race. Nova Scotians should love their country not for what it is, but for what it may become if it is faithful to British tradition and if its citizens continue to share with those in the ancestral haunts the privileges and responsibilities of British citizenship. Just as he refused to tolerate any injustice or inequality in Nova Scotia because it was not British, so he would hear no talk of separation or rebellion because it would cut Nova Scotia off from the source of all that was best and noblest in her life. This theory could be substantiated from a hundred different sources, but a quotation from a speech delivered in Southampton, England, in 1851, will suffice. Howe was at that time in England in the interests of railway communication between the Maritime Provinces and Canada. He took the opportunity to urge improved steamship communication between England and her British North American provinces. In discussing the existing lack of communication he says:

“What are the political effects? That the British Islands throw off not only the bodies but the souls—the clustering affections and ever-springing recollections of home, with the hope to revisit it, which, if not realized, soothes to the end of life and would if the prospects were rational be then bequeathed to the next generation. Whenever gratified, the effects would be conservative of British feelings, and a thousand links of love would be thus woven to bind the two countries together. Let us then have the ocean omnibus, not only to carry the working classes of Great Britain and Ireland to that virgin soil which invites them, but to bring them back—the fortunate to relieve their kindred and those of moderate means to revisit their home or the home of their fathers; to tread the scenes which history hallows, and compare without a blush the modern triumphs and civilisation of England even with those of the proud republic beyond the frontier.”

The speech closes with the following eloquent avowal of his loyalty to the British race: “In the British people I have an abiding faith. I should regret if it were otherwise, for I have an hereditary interest in these questions. During the old times of persecution, four brothers bearing my

name left the southern counties of England and settled in four of the old New England states. Their descendants number thousands and are scattered from Maine to California. My father was the only descendant of that stock who at the Revolution adhered to the side of England. His bones rest in Halifax churchyard. I am his only surviving son, and whatever the future may have in store, I want when I stand beside his grave to feel that I have done my best to preserve the connection he valued, that the British flag may wave above the soil in which he sleeps."

Howe's direct connection with Manitoba was limited to a hurried visit here in the Autumn of 1869, sent by the Dominion Cabinet to study conditions on the spot. On his return he wrote the eloquent dispatches to MacDougall and Archibald, the first lieutenant-governors of Manitoba.

But one cannot refrain from speculation as to what his message would have been to-day if he were here among us. One can easily imagine the great orator growing eloquent over the traditions which we inherit from our pioneers, first and foremost from that self-sacrificing spirit La Verendrye, who with his sons, broke the trail over our province, spent the best years of his life and all of his fortune in exploring those vast regions, hitherto untrod save by the moccasined foot of the Indian. As his imagination kindled he would tell us of Massacre Island, of Fort Rouge, of Portage la Prairie, of the Mandans, the foothills of the Rockies, of the winding courses of the Saskatchewan, the Red and the Assiniboine. One can hear him dwell upon the magnificent imperialism of Selkirk, who sought both to relieve his suffering countrymen by planting them at the strategic posts of our western land and to win back from the United States the thousands of Britons lost by emigration. In both La Verendrye and Lord Selkirk Howe would see, as we should see, a bond of union between French and English, Manitoba and Great Britain. Nor would he forget the contribution of the Hudson's Bay Company in searching for the northwest passage, in planting forts at the most prophetic sites for future cities and in the treatment of the Indian which saved us from those bloody wars

which brought terror to Eastern Canada and the United States. The cockles of his heart would warm also to the factors and traders who maintained the light of civilization so many thousands of miles from all civilizing influences, men who interested themselves in geology, ethnology and geography and left us books of travel that have not been surpassed.

Nor would he forget the heroism and optimism of our immediate ancestors from Quebec, from Ontario and the Maritime Provinces as well as from the Mother Country who braved the hardships of pioneer farming, the grasshoppers, the floods, the blizzards and the hail, the long drives with oxen for wood, to market with grain, to town for provisions; the women who suffered most of all from the monotonous drudgery, who lost all connection with their homes because of distance and inadequate mail service, who bore their children in solitude without adequate care from doctor or nurse, who had for music the howling of the wolf, for clothing the product of their own labor or the chase; who grew weary of the prairie which "held the sun like an unwinking eye" all day long; whose one relief from the vast wilderness was the mirage which flung cities and ships, churches and people and all the realities of the future on the horizon as the dew lifted from the grass in the autumn sunrise.

Can you not hear him telling us all to love our province with that love which makes it worthy, and is in us a perennial spur to raise it up to the highest pinnacle of greatness. "If I were young," he would say, "I should walk or motor over this province from Emerson to Le Pas, from Deloraine to York Factory. I should fill the press with my *Northern and Southern Rambles*; I should tell you of your scenic beauty, your rivers which were once the highway of your fur trade; your railways which you won only after the severest fight with monopoly; of your lakes which teem with fish, of your mines which are hardly prospected, let alone developed; of your stone quarries which will yet cover your prairies with beautiful cities. These resources are yours; see that you make them your own; and then, when you have them, make them subordinate to the higher life—the life

that will exploit your historical and literary resources, will adorn your minds with great masterpieces, your walls with great pictures; your cities with great buildings and your churches with great leaders."

"Is there not in the broad expanse of the prairie," he would say, "something to call you beyond the mere material, to make you noble as the land in which you live, tolerant of varied types, universal in affection; to make you rise from a petty provincialism to a broad-minded Canadianism and a world-serving Imperialism."

All this is easier to do on the platform than in the daily routine of life, but there is something of the spirit even now at work in Manitoba in the self-sacrificing teachers who would rather transform a dozen foreigners into Canadians than wring from their fellow-countrymen all the wealth of Lord Strathcona. Our fathers who incorporated a city when Winnipeg was still a village showed all the optimism which we need to realize our great future. Our young men and young women have all the enthusiasm necessary to make us a literary and artistic centre, if they once get the vision that it is their duty to transmit the time-honoured ideals of our race to new Canadians and to generations yet unborn. In order to retain this vision, to utilize this optimism, it is only necessary when the dark days come to throw ourselves on a sofa for a week and read the letters and speeches of the great Nova Scotian—poet, essayist, journalist, orator, statesman and patriot—Joseph Howe.

